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Peacebuilding Commission

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Burundi configuration

Summary record of the 1st meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 19 September 2007 at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Løvald ..... (Norway)

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07-50992 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters (PBC/2/BDI/1)

1. **The Chairperson** said that, in accordance with established practice and as allowed by the Commission's rules of procedure, and if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Commission wished to hold the meeting as an open one.

2. *It was so decided.*

3. **The Chairperson** suggested that the Commission should adopt the provisional agenda in document PBC/2/BDI/1.

4. *It was so decided.*

Adoption of the conclusions and recommendations of the Peacebuilding Commission on the report of the Chair of the Burundi configuration

5. **The Chairperson** drew attention to the draft conclusions and recommendations of the Peacebuilding Commission following the report of the Chair of the country-specific meeting on Burundi. The document had been prepared by members of the Burundi configuration following a number of informal meetings and his own fact-finding mission to Burundi from 5 to 7 September 2007, on which he had reported to the Peacebuilding Commission on 10 September. The Burundi configuration had also heard from national and international civil society representatives at an informal NGO briefing on 14 September.

6. The document before the Commission outlined the context of the current situation in Burundi, the Burundi configuration's conclusions regarding key issues, and specific recommendations to stakeholders in the peacebuilding process regarding action needed to resolve those issues collectively.

7. No significant changes had been made to the document since it had been last discussed; the final paragraph had merely been tidied up. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Commission wished to adopt the document.

8. *It was so decided.*

9. **The Chairperson** suggested that, in keeping with past practice, the document should be sent with identical letters to the Presidents of the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

10. *It was so decided.*

11. **Mr. Kodera** (Japan) said that it was most appropriate for the Peacebuilding Commission, as an advisory body, to issue documents such as the one just adopted and convey clear advice to the relevant persons and organs.

Other matters

12. **The Chairperson** said that over the next few weeks, in addition to continuing to monitor closely the situation in Burundi, the Commission would pursue its work on formalizing a tracking and monitoring mechanism linked to the Strategic Framework currently being developed under the leadership of the Government of Burundi. The proposed mechanism would be reviewed at the Burundi configuration's next informal meeting, scheduled for 3 October 2007.

13. **Mr. Ntakirutimana** (Burundi) noted with satisfaction that his comments at a previous meeting had been taken into account in the document just adopted. The document was now acceptable to his delegation. His Government was committed to implementing the recommendations contained therein and would continue to work closely with the Commission, for the sake of the Burundian people and for the success of the Commission's work.

14. It was regrettable that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) representative in Burundi, seemingly ignoring the Government's cries of alarm, had called for yet more restraints on Government spending, forcing it to raise the price of oil. That despite the fact that the Government was still unable to reopen schools or pay many civil servants, and that the judiciary had given notice of strike action. It seemed to him that perhaps IMF was not working in conformity with the Commission's wishes.

15. The Government of Burundi, while extremely appreciative of the Commission's support, once again urged it to do everything within its power to ensure that the promised budgetary support arrived as soon as possible, even if that meant seeking additional channels or new formulas. Without budgetary support, his country could face serious difficulties.

16. **Mr. Abdelaziz** (Egypt) said that the Burundian representative's remarks left no doubt as to the

seriousness of the situation in Burundi. That situation was clearly not being helped by the linkage being made between the sixth IMF Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) review and the budgetary support that had been promised by certain donor countries. Such conditionality was harmful, as it could hamper all the Commission's efforts thus far to stabilize the situation in Burundi and prevent a return to conflict. The Commission clearly needed to do more. He proposed temporarily disbursing funds from the Peacebuilding Fund to Burundi and initiating consultations on how to unlink the sixth IMF review, on the one hand, and the efforts of individual donor countries, on the other.

17. **Ms. Rulumeni** (South Africa) aligned her delegation with the statement made by the representative of Burundi.

18. Her Government welcomed the document, in particular its call on the Parti pour la libération du peuple hutu-Forces nationales de libération (PALIPEHUTU-FNL) to re-engage with the Government. A key Government official was expected to visit the region soon in order to convince PALIPEHUTU-FNL that its current tactics would not work. Her Government had also learned that the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania had recently issued an ultimatum to PALIPEHUTU-FNL members still present in that country to withdraw with immediate effect. While her Government understood the anger and frustration of the Tanzanian Government, it called on the Burundian Government and PALIPEHUTU-FNL to recommit themselves to a peaceful resolution of the Burundi conflict. Lastly, her Government was aware that the African Union had set a new deadline for the implementation of the ceasefire agreement, namely 31 December 2007.

19. **The Chairperson** said that the representative of Rwanda had asked to participate in the discussion of the item under consideration.

20. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, Mr. Nsengimana (Rwanda) took a place at the Commission table.*

21. **Mr. Nsengimana** (Rwanda) said that the document clearly demonstrated the Commission's concerns regarding the situation in Burundi and made sensible and necessary recommendations to the various stakeholders.

22. His delegation strongly supported the Burundian representative's comments, which left no doubt that, unless urgent action was taken, the current situation could undermine all the Commission's efforts thus far. The Commission must find ways of preventing that from happening. It could begin by urging IMF and donors to find a solution to the issue of budgetary support.

23. *Mr. Nsengimana (Rwanda) withdrew.*

24. **Mr. Antonio** (Angola) said that, even though they were called to work together, the Commission and its partners did indeed seem to have different objectives with regard to Burundi. Funding was clearly the fundamental issue and needed to be discussed calmly. Above all, it was important to be ready with alternative solutions in case the situation deteriorated any further. In that regard, he endorsed the proposal regarding the need to innovate.

25. Responding to the representative of South Africa, he said that, while he understood the frustration in the region, it was not right for one party to be allowed to make accusations regarding mediation efforts. According to recent media reports, PALIPEHUTU-FNL no longer wanted South Africa to act as mediator. That tactic was well-known among rebel groups. PALIPEHUTU-FNL must be made to understand that everyone was familiar with the work being done by South Africa and that it was important to continue along the same path.

26. Lastly, his delegation fully supported the plea made by the representative of Burundi. It was important to look at all aspects — not just the political and military situation, but also the deteriorating economic situation.

27. **The Chairperson** said that the document adopted by the Commission sent a clear message to both institutional donors and the Government of Burundi. He would continue to maintain close contact with both the Burundian delegation in New York and the Bretton Woods institutions. If it was acceptable to the Commission, he would consult the Bretton Woods institutions in the near future and report back to the Commission in its Burundi configuration. Based on contacts thus far, he was under the impression that well-established procedures were being followed. Moreover, based on his fact-finding mission to Burundi and subsequent discussions, everyone seemed to understand the seriousness of the situation. The issue

remained high on the agenda, not least among the donor community. He would keep a close eye on the situation, on the basis of the document adopted, and provide regular updates.

28. Lastly, he expressed appreciation to all those present for their strong commitment to Burundi at the present critical time.

The meeting rose at 3.55 p.m.